



11

The
Catholic Movement
and the
Archbishops' Decision
with
A Note on certain Resolutions

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THE CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

AND

THE ARCHBISHOPS' DECISION

IF I am not much mistaken, the English nation is at the present moment in danger of committing a serious injustice. In part, it is to be feared, the injustice has been done already; but it is going on, and it has begun to take shape in concrete acts that may easily become of serious import.

It is not a light matter to me thus to accuse my countrymen. In my heart of hearts I believe that there is no nation that, taken as a whole, so desires to be just, or is so willing to do justice even against its own impulses. When the English nation goes wrong, I believe that it is rarely from rooted unfairness, but rather from want of knowledge, from want of clear insight, from want of discrimination in the analysis of different elements in a situation.

And that is just what I suspect is taking place now. There is a widespread feeling abroad that there exists in the Church of England a deliberate movement towards Rome—a movement which on its more moderate side lays stress on all those features in the teaching and practice of our National Church that it has in common with the Church of Rome, and which in its more extreme members is pressing towards a definite appropriation of teaching and practice

that are more distinctively Roman. The nation has awoke to a sense that there is this tendency at work. It believes that a point has been reached at which its own long-standing traditions are threatened. It is beginning to think itself called upon to take a stand, and to say positively that at least the latter part of this tendency must cease, and that Rome-ward innovations must be checked.

Nor can it be denied that this feeling has its apparently substantial grounds. There are a number of facts around us that are capable of being described as I have just described them. It is true that there is a very large and increasing party in the Church which does lay stress on those points of teaching and practice in which we agree with, rather than those on which we differ from, the Church of Rome. As to this party it is allowed that it is within its rights. And although the tendency to keep silence on the points of difference is not altogether approved, and is perhaps regarded with some uneasiness, it is not thought to constitute a reason for interference. But when the tendency goes beyond this, and points regarded as characteristic of the Church of Rome are one after another introduced into our own Church, it is not surprising that an alarm should be raised, and that it should affect even sober-judging people.

Further, it is so much a consequence of the active spirit of initiative in all classes of our people that every movement should be carried on by means of societies; and in the case of this particular movement, which deals directly with the region of things spiritual and sacred, it is so natural that the societies in question should assume a certain character of privacy, that we also cannot be surprised if to the world outside, and especially to the unsympathetic world, there should seem to be not only a movement but at the fringes of the movement what amounts to a conspiracy.

All this, as I have said, is not surprising. We can see

how one step leads on to another; we can see how the feeling of uneasiness gradually becomes suspicion, and how suspicion excites alarm, and how the alarm expresses itself in the demand for repression. Where then, I shall be asked, is the injustice?

The injustice lies here. We are so accustomed to using the two words 'Roman Catholic' together, and the associations which they carry are so constantly fused into a single idea, that we find it extremely difficult to separate in thought what is Catholic from what is Roman. For more than sixty years the High Church party has been insisting on the difference; but the usage is so inveterate that the separation has not even yet been successfully brought home to the popular mind. And we shall wonder less at this, if I am right in supposing that some High Churchmen have not quite brought it home even to themselves.

Speaking broadly, I believe that the High Church party *does* aim at making the Church of England Catholic, and *does not* aim at making it Roman. Or rather its position is really stronger than this. An instructed High Churchman would not allow that he was trying to make the Church of England more Catholic, but only that he was trying to assert those elements of Catholicity which were inherent, though perhaps latent, in its constitution. Our Church is Catholic in the same sense in which the Church of Rome and the Churches of the East are Catholic. It holds to the same great standards of faith, and has preserved the same Church order. The Church of England has done this from the first, and gloried in doing it. And if the High Churchman thinks it right to emphasize what he has in common with these other great Churches, I do not see where he can be gainsaid.

The question really is, How far does the common ground extend? It is inevitable that there should be a certain amount of debateable matter where the one party will

defend as Catholic what the other will condemn as Roman. To begin with, there is no complete agreement as to the definition of what is Catholic. Does it cover the usage of the first two centuries, or of four, or of six? In regard to this, opinions may naturally and legitimately differ.

But besides this inevitable difficulty in discriminating, there is another kind of confusion between things Catholic and things Roman which is less excusable. Every one does not possess either the ability or the opportunity to test accurately where the Catholic ends and the Roman begins. And it is not only possible but sure to happen that, whether from these causes or from simple thoughtlessness, Roman usages should sometimes be adopted as though they were Catholic. The Church of Rome is (locally) the nearest Catholic body to our own, and there are sure to be some who, in the search for what is Catholic, will look to it as their pattern.

Hence arises the necessity for authoritative definition. And if we look at it in its broader context, it is such a definition that the Archbishops have been recently asked to give, and have given. They themselves, however, have not considered the questions submitted to them quite in this light. They have confined themselves to the smaller issue of what was and what was not in accordance with the Law of the Church of England. In this sense they have decided that the ceremonial use of incense and of lights carried in procession is not permissible.

For the sake of simplicity we may take the first of these points only. The second appears to stand upon a very similar footing. It is obvious that the Archbishops could not have decided that the use of incense was un-Catholic. It is common both to the East and to the West. It is in any case early, if not primitive. And the use without doubt existed in our own Church on the very eve of Elizabeth's first Act of Uniformity.

The Archbishops' decision thus brings into relief the possibility that there may be some practices which, though Catholic in themselves, are not consistent with the Law of the Church of England. That was, indeed, only to be expected. 'Every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish ceremonies or rites of the Church ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be done to edifying.' It follows that there will be some local usages to which it would be the duty of members of the particular Church to conform.

Hitherto questions of the kind which the Archbishops have had to determine have been complicated by two difficulties: (1) the hesitation to regard omission as equivalent to prohibition; and (2) the ambiguity as to the meaning of 'the second year of King Edward the Sixth' in the Ornaments Rubric. The Archbishops have thought that they could escape these difficulties by taking their stand upon the Act of Uniformity of A.D. 1559. They find there what seems to them to be a prohibition which they can use without having recourse to the Ornaments Rubric.

I am not lawyer enough to know exactly in what relation this earlier Act stands to the later Act of A.D. 1662. It seems natural to suppose that the later Act would supersede the earlier, and govern the conditions under which we live. It has the further advantage of embodying decisions of Convocation as well as of Parliament. It would not however serve the purpose of the Archbishops, because it does not contain the phrase on which they rely.

The portion of the Act cited by the Archbishops is as follows:

'That all and singular Ministers in any Cathedral or Parish Church . . . shall from and after the Feast of the Nativity of St. John Baptist next coming, be bounden to say and use the Mattins Evensong Celebration of the Lord's Supper and administration of each of the Sacraments

and all their common and open Prayer, *in such order and form* as is mentioned in the said Book so authorised by Parliament in the said fifth and sixth year of the reign of King Edward the Sixth, with one alteration or addition of certain Lessons to be used on every Sunday in the year, and the form of the Litany altered and corrected, and two sentences only added in the delivery of the Sacrament to the Communicants, and *none other or otherwise.*'

The sentence is long and somewhat involved, and a question may be raised as to the connexion in which these last words are intended to be taken. I have before me a text of the Act in which (by placing a semi-colon after 'Edward the Sixth') they appear to be taken as qualifying 'alteration or addition,' as though there was to be no further exception beyond the slight changes which were being made in the edition of the Second Prayer Book of Edward VI annexed to the Act. I believe, however, that the Archbishops are right in connecting them with 'such order and form' several lines above. My reason is that the words appear to be taken over from a yet earlier Act of A.D. 1549, in which they occur in a like connexion.

The Archbishops infer that the words are meant to exclude all variations whatsoever, not only in the Services but in all possible accessories to the Services.

This interpretation certainly appears to go beyond that given by the late Archbishop Benson in the Lincoln Case of similar words occurring a little lower down in the Act. It was observed that the words 'Order, Form and Manner' are technical terms, and that what is forbidden by them 'is the saying of the various Services according to any other Service Book, including the First of Edward VI, although this receives special commendation in the Second Act of Uniformity.' I believe that this is the true sense; and it would give the words a more limited reference than the present decision.

Even if they had the wider reference, it would still not be easy to follow the reasoning by which the two Archbishops (on p. 13) put aside the appeal to the Ornaments Rubric. They try to make the Elizabethan Act taken with the Ornaments Rubric contradict itself; but they only do so by *assuming* the correctness of their own interpretation. The other alternative is more natural, that the Act is consistent, and the interpretation wrong. The Ornaments Rubric was itself part of the annexed Prayer Book, and if it applies to ceremonies at all, governed the ceremonies appertaining to the Prayer Book. The Archbishops would make it not apply to ceremonies on the ground that although it orders certain ornaments it does not order their use. This seems almost to reduce the rubric to a dead letter. But it appears also to overlook the history of the rubric.

The Ornaments Rubric is given in four different forms, in the Prayer Book of 1559, in the Act of Uniformity of the same date, and in the Prayer Books of 1604 and 1662. In the last of these and in the Act the words appear in the form with which we are familiar: 'such Ornaments of the Church and of the Ministers thereof, at all times of their ministration, shall be retained and be in use,' &c. But in the two earlier Prayer Books they run thus: 'that the Minister at the time of the Communion, and at all other times in his Ministration, shall use such Ornaments in the Church as were in use,' &c. Here the use of the Ornaments (in other words the ceremonies appropriate to them) is expressly enjoined. Nor is it probable that any substantial difference was intended between the two forms of the rubric¹. It is more likely that the current form was adopted as being rather more inclusive: it alone seemed to make provision for the ornaments of the Church as well as of the Minister.

¹ The Privy Council ruled to this effect in the case *Westerton v. Liddell*.

I greatly doubt whether the Archbishops' treatment of the Ornaments Rubric will, in any respect, give permanent satisfaction. They absolve themselves from the necessity of determining whether the Ornaments in question are those actually in use in the second regnal year of King Edward the Sixth (January 28, 1548—January 27, 1549), or those prescribed in the Prayer Book annexed to the First Act of Uniformity which passed the House of Commons (on January 21, 1549), though we do not know that it received the assent of the King, just before the end of that year. This is a moot point, which we may leave open as the Archbishops do.

It is, however, of some importance to note that one of the documents brought up in the present controversy appears to have a very pertinent bearing upon the point. Sandys, afterwards Archbishop of York, who was one of the Committee for revising the Prayer Book in 1559, speaking of his own work says: 'The last Book of Service is gone through with a proviso to retain the ornaments which were used in the first and second year of King Edward VI until it please the Queen to take other order for them.' Here we have a contemporary interpretation of the disputed words, and whatever ambiguity there may be as to the second year of King Edward VI there can be none as to the first. There can be no doubt at all that incense was in full use in that year. But if so, it would be difficult to see how the conclusion could be avoided that it is equally lawful to this day¹.

We can well believe that the Archbishops were glad to escape, as they thought, the necessity of assuming that omission is the same thing as prohibition. But we have

¹ It would be, however, wrong to suggest that there is not a substantial case for the other view, which was adopted by the Privy Council in *Westerton v. Liddell*. The Judges do not seem to have had before them this letter of Archbishop Sandys, but they refer to an Act which appears to tell the other way.

seen much reason to think that the expedient by which they do this is untenable. In the end, whether we go upon the Act of Uniformity of 1559 or not, the only ground on which the use of incense can be declared illegal is that the rubrics of the Prayer Book do not enjoin it. Is this argument from silence justified?

The advocates of incense would say that it was definitely covered by the Ornaments Rubric. But, waiving that point, must it not in any case be a large assumption to suppose that all the old practices to which men were accustomed could be swept away simply by silence? A change so thorough and searching as (on the Archbishops' view) this was intended to be, called for explicit commands, both negative and positive.

But were these first acts of the reign of Queen Elizabeth of that description? I will endeavour shortly to answer this question. It brings me, however, to another part of my subject, the Archbishops' reading of history, which, speaking with all deference, I cannot but think leaves much to be desired.

Taking the points raised in chronological order, I may be allowed to refer for a moment to what is said as to the date of the first introduction of incense into Christian worship.

The Archbishops allege as a reason for the omission of incense that 'it was certainly not in use in the Church for at least three hundred years from the Apostolic times.'

The evidence respecting the use of incense is fully collected in the pamphlet laid before the Archbishops, and entitled *The Case for Incense*. But I will speak only of the data into which I had looked myself before referring to this collection. The natural place to turn to first was the *Peregrinatio ad Loca Sancta*, first published by Gamurrini in 1887. These travels are ascribed for good reasons and by general consent to a certain noble lady, Silvia of Aquitaine, and to the years 385-388. They contain a full

and graphic description of the Services at which the pilgrim was present during her visit to Jerusalem, which included Holy Week. I was not long in finding a passage directly to the point. The spelling of the MS. is preserved—

Dictis ergo his tribus psalmis, et factis orationibus tribus, ecce etiam thimiatastia inferuntur intro spelunca Anastasis, ut tota basilica Anastasis repleatur odoribus.

Censers were taken into the cave [of the Holy Sepulchre], 'so that the whole church [which the Greeks called *Anastasis*, and which we call the Church of the Holy Sepulchre] was filled with the odour.' The use of incense here is unmistakably ceremonial. In the years 385–388 it was evidently no novel usage but already well established. It would be no straining of probability to suppose that it dated back to the founding of the church by Constantine.

This would lead us by a natural step to other evidence for the same period. The *Liber Pontificalis* contains, under the popedom of Silvester (314–335), inventories, probably authentic, of the furniture of the churches built by Constantine at Rome. Several of these include golden censers, e.g. the *Basilica Constantiniana* (now the Lateran):

Thymiamateria II ex auro purissimo, pens. lib. XXX.

Again, apparently in the Baptistry of the same church,

Tymiamaterium ex auro purissimo cum gemmis prasinis XLVIII, pens. lib. XV.

To St. Peter's Constantine gave

Tymiamaterium ex auro purissimo cum gemmis ex undique ornatum numero LX, pens. lib. XV. (Duchesne, Lib. Pontif. i. 174, 177.)

In view of the evidence which we have just had for Jerusalem it would be fair to conclude that the censers in these churches were intended to be used ceremonially. So that the proof of the existence of such use would be carried back full fifty years: and even then we should be by no

means at the beginning. The last Apostle did not die before A.D. 98. It would therefore be precarious to say that incense 'was certainly not in use in the Church' for even *two hundred years* after the Apostolic times, not to speak of 'at least three hundred.'

The point is not unimportant, because while the Church of England undoubtedly lays stress on ancient usage, it is not so clear within what limits usage is to be described as 'ancient.' Bishop Jewell boldly, and indeed it may be thought over-boldly, challenged his Romanist opponents to show that their distinctive uses were within six centuries of the Apostles.

We return to the Act of Uniformity which passed the House of Lords on April 28, 1559. The Archbishops have interpreted this Act with the utmost possible stringency. They read into the absence of minute regulations in Queen Elizabeth's Prayer Book a systematic exclusion of the older ceremonies. They suppose that on and after June 24 of the year 1559 every ceremony not specifically ordered was to cease. They do not think that the cessation was really so abrupt. But they set down any irregularities rather to the difficulty of enforcing the Act than to any lack of strictness in the Act itself. They remark 'that the time was a time of great excitement and unsettlement. The whole country was in a feverish condition. Elizabeth and her advisers could not be sure that insurrection and civil war might not begin at any moment. It was necessary to act without delay. Elizabeth herself would have preferred to bring back the First Prayer Book of Edward the Sixth; but she did not feel sure that the country would bear this, and all through her reign, in spite of her despotic character, she showed herself steadily determined to have her people with her. It was impossible to consult the Convocations; the reign of Mary had made them, and especially their leaders the Bishops, untrustworthy for the purpose in hand.'

We may well ask whether such a time and such conditions were suited for the issue of a sharp and stringent Act, forbidding by what it did not say as well as by what it did. The probabilities against this are really even stronger than the Archbishops' statement would make them. Elizabeth had only come to the throne on November 17 of the previous year. It was neither her wish nor her policy to drive the Romanists to extremities. She wished rather to conciliate them, and, as a matter of fact, did to a large extent succeed in conciliating them. For eleven years of her reign the Romanist laity habitually conformed to the English Prayer Book. Of the whole body of Marian clergy less than two hundred refused obedience. It was said at the time (but also denied) that Pope Pius IV was ready to approve the English Prayer Book if his other demands had been granted. Elizabeth herself was still playing with Philip II, and had not at once refused his offer of marriage. Her personal leanings towards a more elaborate ceremonial are well known.

There is every reason to think that these first changes were intended to be cautious, conciliatory, and conservative. The chief object was to gain time. The Elizabethan Statute expressly provides that the Ornaments mentioned in it should be in use 'until other order shall be therein taken.'

Whether any such order was taken is debated. Probably it was not, in the sense intended. But it would be only in accordance with the English character and with what has happened elsewhere in English history if a settlement, intended in the first instance to be provisional, should have been allowed by lapse of time and use to become permanent. It was found to hit the happy mean, which was what the nation really wanted ; and its very omissions and ambiguities have all told in the direction of liberty, which one party after another has striven to destroy, but which the nation as a whole has jealously maintained.

This view of the incompleteness of the rubrical directions in the Prayer Book appears, upon the face of it, far more probable than that omission is equivalent to prohibition.

Let us suppose for a moment only that there was a doubt on this head, and ask whether in that case it was wise or expedient to decide in the sense of greatest stringency.

Two considerations present themselves.

One is that the spiritual life of the Church as we see it around us is probably more vigorous and active than it has ever been. The temper of the Church is expansive. Neither the clergy nor the laity can be said to spare themselves in acts of devotion. At such a time a narrow uniformity is to be deprecated. The more ardent spirits are chilled and repressed by it. Of course it is easier to carry out a uniform system than one which admits of variety. There may be friction here and there, where priest and people are pulling different ways. But on the whole the clergy have succeeded in carrying their people with them. In by far the greater number of the churches which have been most conspicuous for experiments in ritual there is perfect harmony, and the indications point to a satisfaction of real wants and instincts. I could well have understood it if the Archbishops had shown themselves unwilling to interfere any further than they were compelled.

The other consideration is that there is a strong desire in the minds of many persons for better relations with the great communions from which we are parted. That desire has been checked, but by no means extinguished, by the rebuffs which it has received in recent years. In any case one would think that the rulers of the Church would naturally look forward to the future, and abstain from doing anything that would emphasize the insular character of our Church at the expense of its Catholicity.

If the law of the Church were clear and precise, there

would of course be no choice ; but the previous argument has gone to show that in the case of incense the law was by no means clear and precise. So that here, too, there would have been a motive for leaving a reasonable latitude.

It is impossible not to compare the present decision with the late Archbishop's judgement in the case of the Bishop of Lincoln. And, applying this test, it is equally impossible not to regard it with great disappointment. The exact interpretation of documents and careful study of evidence which characterized the earlier judgement are absent from the later. In this their place is taken by an apparent short-cut, which examination has shown to be delusive. Hence, while the one judgement carried with it conviction almost all along the line, the other carries with it no conviction at all.

The decision is all the more disappointing because the action of the Archbishops which led up to it had seemed so thoroughly statesmanlike and well considered. It was an excellent step to take advantage of the method prescribed at the end of the preface 'Concerning the Service of the Church' (dating from 1549). No more quiet and peaceable way of settling disputed points could be found, or one the legitimacy of which could be so little questioned.

Nor have I really any doubt that, whether it is right or wrong in the nature of things, the decision ought to be obeyed. The arguments in favour of disobedience put forward in the correspondence columns of the newspapers were transparent sophistries, which could only injure the writers and the cause they advocate. But I rejoice to see that the majority of those implicated are likely to yield.

I do not know how far the arguments put forward in this pamphlet will be thought to hold good, or how far on these or on other grounds public opinion will endorse or decline to endorse the decision of the Archbishops. Neither do I know what possibilities there may be of amending

a decision once given that is afterwards discovered to be wrong. For that we must put our trust in the wisdom of the Bishops and the disinterestedness of the Archbishops themselves. It is certain that a doubtful ruling will not be oppressively enforced.

In the meantime those of us who are onlookers not personally involved ought to give the tribute of respectful sympathy to those who, at the call of duty, suppress their own preferences and relinquish practices which they have found to be edifying. I know too well the strength of attachment with which such things wind themselves round the heart, to think the sacrifice really insignificant. Its value will be greater as a mark of self-discipline and self-control than it could be as yielded to external compulsion.

We may also do what in us lies to press forward the movement which seeks to recover for the Church the power of legislating more effectively for itself. By the side of all the disquieting symptoms of recent years there have been others, as I cannot but think, at once more deeply rooted and more hopeful. The way in which the two Archbishops have worked together, the combined action of the two Convocations and the House of Laymen, point to possibilities in the future as to what may be done in the way of free and spontaneous self-reform with a minimum of appeal to Parliament. I believe also that among the great mass of the clergy there would be a readiness to fall in with and to second such attempts beyond what might be suspected. Other bodies have shown us what may be effected on these lines. And the spectacle of a Church reforming and reconstituting itself by the voluntary co-operation of its members would be one worthy of the English name.

NOTE ON CERTAIN RESOLUTIONS

PASSED AT A CONFERENCE OF CHURCHMEN ON APRIL 28, 1899.

AMONG the acts of injustice referred to above I must needs include a series of Resolutions which have been largely circulated, and which I regret to see are signed by many of my own personal friends. They read like an effective indictment; but they only do so by attributing to High Churchmen a number of positions which they do not really hold. I will take the resolutions in order.

1. The signatories pledge themselves 'to co-operate in maintaining by all lawful and godly means [the] Protestant and comprehensive character [of our Church], and to guard and cherish the great heritage of religious freedom and progress secured to the English people at the Reformation, enriched by three centuries of Anglican life and thought.'

The words are stirring words, and I could cordially assent to them if I might interpret 'Protestant' in such a way as not to be inconsistent with 'comprehensive.' But can it be said that the tenor of the remaining Resolutions is comprehensive?

2. The Second Resolution is directed against 'the endeavours which are being made by a section of the clergy to bring back an unscriptural and materialistic doctrine of the Holy Communion, and a ritual hardly, if at all, distinguishable from that of the Roman Mass repudiated at the Reformation.'

No High Churchman would admit that his doctrine was really 'unscriptural and materialistic.' It is based directly

on two contexts of Holy Scripture (the Words of Institution and 1 Cor. xi. 29). And, whatever we may think of the interpretation of these passages, it cannot be said to be wanting in strictness.

The idea that his teaching was really 'materialistic,' a thoughtful High Churchman would repudiate no less than his opponents.

As to ritual, our own Communion Service is made up of elements every one of which has its counterpart in ancient Liturgies and Service-books. And High Churchmen do but seek to emphasize this continuity. Perhaps I may be allowed to refer to a paper by Canon C. E. Hammond, Vicar of Menheniot (*The Order of Holy Communion*, Plymouth, 1897), as exhibiting the relation of our own Service to the older Services in a singularly clear, simple and instructive manner.

3. From the Third Resolution on Confession I do not substantially differ. But I think that it should be distinctly recognized that there are many minds to which Confession is a very real help, and I believe that in practice it is chiefly such that have recourse to it. On the whole I believe that, speaking with the rough approximation which is all that is attainable in human affairs, those for whom Confession is a good thing practise it, and those for whom it would not be good do not. I should object as much as the signatories to having it pressed indiscriminately as a duty.

4. The Resolution on the Reservation of the Sacrament seems to me to cover and confuse two distinct things; reservation for purposes of Worship, and reservation for the Communion of the Sick. For the latter, properly guarded, it seems to me that there is much to be said.

5. The last Resolution speaks of 'the pretension put forward by a section of Churchmen that the law of the Church in spiritual matters is to be authoritatively interpreted by the clerical order alone.'

I would ask, What section of Churchmen maintains this? As far as I know, High Churchmen would be perfectly willing to give to laymen a voice in interpreting the law of the Church, provided that in some valid sense they are appointed by the Church and represent the Church.

I confess that these Resolutions remind me forcibly of what I would conclude by urging, the solemn duty which we owe alike to God and man, a duty at no time more imperative than at the present, to use the utmost care in ascribing to others such opinions only as are really theirs.



